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DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SUBSPECIES OF THE LITTLE
YELLOW BITTERN FROM THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

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While examining and comparing skins of *Ixobrychus sinensis* collected in Polynesia, with specimens taken elsewhere it became evident that birds from the Philippine Islands differ constantly in certain characters from those from other regions. In spite of the fact that a number of names have been given to these bitterns from various parts of their extensive range, there seems to be none available for the form under discussion. The birds found in the Philippine Islands therefore may be known as

Ixobrychus sinensis astrologus, subsp. nov.

Characters.—Similar to *Ixobrychus sinensis bryani* (Seale) from Guam but smaller, bill in adult more slender, back darker, more brownish, under tail coverts somewhat more buffy, upper breast and foreneck slightly paler, back of neck slightly paler, more reddish.

Description.—Type, No. 254201, U. S. National Museum, male adult, from Paete, Laguna, Luzon, Philippine Islands; collected July 26, 1915, by R. C. McGregor and A. Celestino. Forehead slate-gray shading at once into dusky neutral gray on crown, this neutral gray extending over the slightly elongated crest; back of neck pecan brown, this color passing down to shoulders; back and scapulars snuff brown, the feathers of the upper back tipped with olive-brown, the snuff brown of the back shading into fuscous on the rump; upper tail coverts black, lightly glossed with faintly iridescent greenish; tertials dull sayal brown faintly edged with hair brown; greater and middle wing coverts tawny-olive, broadly margined with pinkish buff; lesser wing coverts slightly paler than tawny-olive; shoulder pecan brown; exposed upper surfaces of primaries, secondaries, feathers of alula and rectrices dusky neutral gray; outer edge of outer primary very narrowly margined with cream color; median portion of outer web of outer feathers on alula broadly margined with cream color, becoming white toward the base; anterior margin of wing, under

wing coverts and axillars white, faintly washed with pinkish buff at bend of wing; throat white, washed in center with cinnamon-buff; superciliary stripe, sides of head and neck dull mikado brown, this color merging into cinnamon-buff on foreneck, the feathers of sides of neck tipped slightly with pinkish buff; foreneck and upper breast washed with cinnamon-buff, the feathers white basally; sides and flanks cinnamon-buff; lower breast, abdomen and under tail coverts washed with pinkish buff, the bases of the feathers broadly white; outer side of tibia cinnamon-buff, inner side pinkish buff; an area on either side of upper breast with centers of feathers dusky neutral gray, broadly margined with cinnamon-buff, the whole nearly concealed by the elongate feathers extending down from the base of the foreneck; base of culmen dull brown, distal two-thirds blackish; rest of bill light brown, darker towards tip; tarsus, toes and nails dark dull brown (from dried skin).

Measurements (in millimeters).—Males (4 specimens) wing 119.5–127.5 (123.9), tail 34.5–42 (38.6), exposed culmen 50–55 (51.4), tarsus 43–46 (44.5).

Females (2 specimens), wing 123.5–124 (123.7), tail 39.5, exposed culmen 53–55 (54), tarsus 44–45 (44.5).

Range.—Specimens examined from Laguna (Paete), Cavite, Ilocos Norte (Panay Lake), Luzon; and Panay, Philippine Islands.

Remarks.—In coloration this new form comes nearer to *Ixobrychus sinensis bryani* (Seale) from Guam than to any of the other forms of the Little Yellow Bittern at present known. From *Ixobrychus s. sinensis* from China the present subspecies differs in being darker, more rufescent above, more buffy, less whitish below, and in having the wing coverts much more buffy in color. It needs no comparison with the race occurring in the islands of Japan as that form is distinct from all of the other subspecies of *sinensis* in its large size and dark coloration. Three adult males of *I. s. astrologus*, in addition to the characters outlined in the diagnosis above, differ from adult males of *bryani* in having the greater and middle wing coverts grayer and less buffy. In another adult specimen examined (Cat. No. 77002), which is marked as coming from the Philippines without more certain locality, these wing coverts are similar in color to those in the birds from Guam.

I am greatly indebted to Mr. R. C. McGregor of the Bureau of Science in Manila, Philippine Islands, for adult skins of the Philippine form of the Little Yellow Bittern, and for the loan of one specimen in the collections under his charge, from the island of Guam. Without these a satisfactory diagnosis of the bird from the Philippine Islands would not have been possible.

Though the bitterns when under the observation of man are noted for their pose as star-gazers, it seems that this subterfuge is merely the pretense of a sciolist; wherefore it is more fitting to name this present bird *ἄστρολόγος* as the exponent of a false science, rather than *ἄστρονόμος*, the proper title for a more sincere student of the stars.